Webliography: School Counselor Contributions to the IEP

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**Summary**

Milsom, Goodnough, and Akos believe school counselors are an underused resource in the development and implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. The authors believe School Counselors (SC) should serve on the IEP Team, but should not take the place of an administrator. SC’s are usually the only staff members trained in Group Processes and can serve as a valuable component to the IEP team through summarization and reflection. They are also trained to look at the Social/Emotional side of the student and not just the Academics. The authors also explained that SC’s are rarely consulted for transitional planning for students with IEP’s even though they have knowledge of career development. This article seemed to be written for special education teachers as a way to initiate collaboration with SC’s.

**Critique**

Reading this article as an up-and-coming counselor, I was particularly interested in the position the authors took. It was written as if to inform special education teachers as to why and how SC’s can help in the IEP process and also to persuade them to include SC’s on multidisciplinary teams.

SC’s usually are “called” into their profession because of their ability to make connections with people. This personable personality trait can really help in IEP meetings as SC’s have the ability to make parents feel at ease. They can keep the meetings focused on all areas of the student: Social/Emotional, Academic, and Career. SC’s can also interpret the educational jargon that many parents do not understand and educators forget to explain.

At the school where I currently work, the SC is sometimes involved with the IEP meetings, usually if the teachers or parents request it. However, in my experience the SC is really seen as just a liaison between parents and staff.

I was glad to see that this article highlighted the importance of Special Education Teachers taking the lead to get SC’s involved. Some SC’s that I have encountered seem to have the mindset that their job is less important than that of other jobs in the school. This article puts the initiation of collaboration onto the Special Education Teacher to help SC’s become involved in the collaboration as they have been isolated for so long.

**References**

Milsom, A., Goodnough, G., & Akos, P. (2007). School Counselor Contributions to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process. *Preventing School Failure*, *52*(1), 19-24. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.